

A Stupid Genius.

Chicago News: Harry Shaw was the very last person of whom one would have thought it, but that is the way that things go in this world. He was a newspaper man and a successful one, having worked himself up from the petty reporter to first assistant editor on the Truth and Joy.

He was in love, had over ears, heels over head, any term that can describe that utterly blissful, absolutely absurd and ridiculous condition of mind or heart, or whatever it is that at times overtakes even the most sensible of men. He was in love, but he couldn't tell her. It's a fact, he couldn't. He had tried a dozen times—a dozen! He had tried a hundred, but somehow he couldn't say to Alice Rogers: "I love you."

He felt sure she loved him—knew he loved her—had been dancing attendance over her for a year, sending her flowers, candy—everything allowable—had found all accepted with thanks, and yet there he was just where he had been on Christmas eve just a year ago that very day. No, yes, perhaps a little more at home in that big, old house on Tenth street, and that was all.

But this Christmas eve he was determined to make himself a Christmas gift to Alice—no, she was to be his Christmas gift to himself. But how to bring the gift about, from him to her, from her to him; however it should turn out he could not see, indeed, he was all at sea. Too absurd. He, Harry Shaw, with such a persuasive tongue and winning way that he could corkscrew information out of the most crabbed and stolid of men "interviewed" and yet with Alice—dumb! He wondered at himself.

That afternoon he pushed his papers together impatiently and got up and put on his coat, took his hat, said, "I'll be in about 8"—it was then 3 in the afternoon—and went out. The air was full of Christmas—bits of green everywhere. He set his teeth.

"Alice—Alice," he said to himself, "I'll—do it to-day or I'll—"

He couldn't think what he would do. He went to his rooms at the Benedict, and got some parcels that held gifts for the Rogers family, big and little, and then went up to Tenth street. He was shown into the big, delightful, home-like front parlor, full of books and work and so of evidences of a cultivated taste. Alice came in at once, and led him out to the billiard room, where the tree was and also her mother and her aunt.

But even to sober eyes Alice was lovely. The parcels were at once opened—that is, all but the three for those present—and their contents admired, and then he began to help tie the bundles onto the tree.

"Good gracious!" he said suddenly.

"What is the matter?" they all three cried.

"Oh, nothing—there are very sharp sort of—or—bristles on this tree—they prick one—they really do."

But it was not the bristles that had pricked him, but an idea.

"I'll do it—I certainly will—but how? Upon a step-ladder—two other women in the room—likely to stay on the step-ladder every minute that I am in the house. Heavens! What a fool I am!"

So he was. Just then Mrs. Rogers was calling out of the room to see a poor woman who had come for her Christmas gift, and Miss Rogers said that she must go upstairs to get the rest of the things. "How to do it, how to do it," rang itself in his head, and accident brought the opportunity.

"Who is that?" he said, pointing to a picture on the wall.

"A question of 'was'—a great great uncle."

Uncle! What a leading she had given him.

"Curses! Looks like a dear old uncle of mine!"

Oh, shade of Ananias! They were no more alike than a turnip and a peach.

"He was a jolly old boy—he really was an old boy, 85 when he died—but a boy all the same, and a jolly one."

He told such capital stories, and he told them so well—on this branch, you say? Isn't it a little heavy? Try that lower one—yes, that's better. About uncle, you know; well, you didn't know him, but I did, so it's all the same."

Here Alice looked up at him, but he did not see her glance—it was a swift one; she thought he was rattling on in an unusual way, but he kept on tying up bundles with pink ties in a very matter-of-fact fashion, and Harry went on.

"Well, he used to tell one story that I thought amazingly good. I wonder if you will think so? It was about a place down in Rhode Island, called 'Granberry Center'—where people about a hundred years ago—really, I do mean a hundred years—well, this was the story; they conducted their courtin'—the word

came out with a sudden jerk, and then he said it over again, "courtin'" in such a remarkable way—"I want to tell you about it. When a couple had been—well, you know—kissin' company, as they call it—this was my uncle's story, you know."

Here Alice looked at him in a slightly startled and amazed way, and then a dawning light of understanding came into her eyes that he couldn't see, for he was standing on the step just above her head, and a ghost of a smile hovered around her pretty mouth.

"Well," he said, "my uncle said that when the man—lover, you know, felt that he ought to speak and didn't know how, and—well, they used to be sitting by what they called the 'fore-room' fire, built on purpose," he began to hurry his words a little, "alone, you know, of course—no bothering with chaperones then—and he'd get the slate and then he wrote on it—there was always a pencil tied to the slate—I don't think they had frames then—on their slates, I mean—he wrote: Hello! I think I can show you better—I mean to tell you better if I write it. Just hand me a bit of that wrapping paper. Thank you. I have a pencil right here—wrote on it this—"

Then with a shaking hand he wrote three words and handed to Alice a many-cornered scrap of common brown wrapping paper, on which was written, just like this:

Yes
or
No

Alice took it—looked at it, and said in the most casual way: "And what happened then?"

"Why, that was the funny part of it. She wet her finger—it was a slate—and rubbed out either the 'yes' or the 'no'—and Uncle John said it was usually the 'or no'—and—then, why it was considered an engagement. Wasn't it funny?"

"Well," said Alice slowly, "it was queer and ingenious, too. But this is a great deal more funny—very, very much more funny."

She had stepped behind him, and, luckily, a little way off.

"What is funnier?" said Harry, trying to twist about so that he could see her, and he held a bundle that was about half tied onto the very topmost branch. As he did so—

"Why, this," said Alice, and she handed him the paper.

He looked at it quite dazed for a moment, for where the "or no" had been there was a black smudge—for the pencil had been a soft one. Suddenly the bundle crashed down to the floor through the branches, and they all swayed violently, and he made one leap to the floor and her side. "You dearest girl!" and his arm was around her, and he had kissed her—absolutely kissed her—before he said: "Do you mean it? Do you absolutely mean it? Shall we—shall I—will you really—really mean it?"

"Harry Shaw," she said, "you are certainly a paradox—at once the most ingenious and most stupid of men."

And then she put her head down on his shoulder and laughed, but her eyes were wet when he raised it again.

And when Jack Rogers said: "What did Mr. Shaw say to you, sister, when he asked you to be engaged to him?" Alice said, quite truthfully, "Not one word."

RANG UP FIVE EXTRA FARES.

Car Didn't Stop, but Conductor and

Pasenger Had a Hot Row.

Chicago Record: It was on a Morgan Park and Blue Island electric car the other day that a small boy had his cherished fishing pole jolted into the road as the car rocked over a rough piece of the line. Naturally, the boy was going out after it, headfirst, but he was providentially jerked back by a stout man with humane instinct.

"Hold still, sonny," said the stout man, and, reaching quickly up overhead, he grasped the cord and rang up five fares in rapid succession.

The conductor was in the front part of the car, talking to the motorman, but it only took the fractional part of a second to reach the stout man, who was about to ring up a few more fares, and explain the error briefly and energetically. The stout man resented the tone of the explanation.

"I'd have thought any darned fool would have known better than that," said the conductor.

"Maybe you would," retorted the stout man, pointedly.

"I ought to make you pay that 25 cents."

"Perhaps you ought, but don't trouble yourself to do it."

"You mean to say you won't take it?"

"I guess I know my business all right, and you can't tell me what it is."

"Maybe not. I'll have a little talk with my friend, the superintendent about it, and see whether he can."

"I guess you know the superintendent."

"You're a good guesser, but then you set lots of practice."

"Are you going to pay that 25 cents, or do I put you off?"

"You may be a good guesser, but you are a poor bluffer. No, I'm not going to pay that 25 cents. The best thing you can do is to let it apply on some of the fares you forgot to ring up."

"I've a notion to put you off, anyway."

"The trouble with you is that you change your mind too often."

"And they keep it up that way from Eighty-eighth street to One Hundred and Third street, where the stout man rose to get off. Then the boy who had been an intensely interested listener, realized for the first time that his chance of recovering the pole was gone. He began to cry dimly, and the stout and triumphant man consoled him with the sum total of the five fares."

SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY.

A Slow-Burning Floor—Portable Cannon—Artificial Lithographic Stone—A New Attack Upon the Aurora Borealis—A Modern Experiment—Spreading Plague Among Rats—Nutmeg Manufacture—The Greatest Earthquake Territory.

A so-called fire-resisting floor, constructed as required by the London County Council, was lately tested by British fire engineers. The floor was of seven-eighth inch straight joint planks, laid upon fir joists seven by two inches in section and twelve and one-half inches between centers, with a ceiling beneath of five-eighth inch match-board. Wood fillets nailed along the joists two inches above the lower edge supported a layer of concrete between the joists five inches deep. The floor had an area of one hundred square feet, and was loaded with bricks to one hundred pounds per square foot. In fifteen minutes after a fire was lighted under the floor, the wooden ceiling was entirely consumed. The flame did not penetrate the floor until the end of fifty-four minutes, causing the floor to crack at the end of sixty minutes, and to collapse completely in eighty-two minutes. The joists were found to be burned and charred for two or two and a half inches up from the bottom, but otherwise sound.

A new Belgian gun, adopted by the State of Congo and expected to come into extensive use, weighs 450 pounds with the carriage, and throws a shell weighing 3.3 pounds, using a charge of seven and three-fourth pounds of black powder or three and one-fourth pounds of cordite. Its essential peculiarity is that it can be taken apart for ready carrying by men or animals to places inaccessible for ordinary artillery. It forms a load for nine men, the dismounted gun being assigned to three, the wheels to two, the cheeks to two, the pointing screw and duplicate pieces to one, and the equipments to one. Other men carry ammunition, a box of ten cartridges, weighing fifty-seven pounds, being a load.

A tree census just completed in the province of Saxony, Prussia, shows a total of 12,733,481 fruit trees. Of these 52.7 per cent are plum trees; 19.4 apple trees; 16.8 sweet cherry trees; and 10.3 pear trees.

Some photographic dry plates have been tried after keeping fifteen years. The sensitiveness was considerably lessened, but the plates were useful except those that had been packed in contact with paper. The latter were hopelessly fogged.

An imitation lithographic stone lately patented in England consists of a plate of zinc coated with a stony compound. The zinc is first prepared by cleaning and placing in a solution of potassium bicarbonate, which causes a layer of zinc carbonate to form upon the surface. To this layer the stony material firmly adheres. The material is a mixture of sulphate of lime, calcium chloride and aluminum oxide, produced by the action of hydrochloric and sulphuric acids upon limestone and aluminum, and given the yellowish tint of lithographic stone by a little ferric chloride. The mixture, with the addition of a solution of soda, is sprayed by an injector upon the prepared zinc.

The destruction of rats by bacteria has been a subject of experiment by M. J. Danysz, of the Pasteur Institute of Paris. An epidemic disease having been noticed in field-mice, its germ was sought, and was found in a bacillus of globular shape. This micro-organism has been carefully passed through a long series of repeated culture in mice and rats. The result has been an increase of virulence until the final culture proved to be sure death to rats in laboratory trials, and this has been followed by attempts to inoculate the rats infesting farms, warehouses and other places. Reports from several hundred localities have now shown a complete disappearance of rats in 50 per cent of the cases, and greatly reduced numbers in 30 per cent, while in 20 per cent the method has failed.

Connecticut, as the "wooden nutmeg state," must look to its laurels. Belgium counts among its industries the manufacture of artificial nutmegs, which are found to consist of finely-ground extracted or injured nutmegs, mixed with about 20 per cent of mineral substances, and are said to be so cleverly made as almost to defy detection, especially when mixed with genuine kernels. The imitation can be detected by various tests. On being cut the kernels lack the well-known plant-like structure of the genuine, they become soft when soaked in boiling water, on being burned they leave about 15 per cent of ashes instead of the usual 2 or 3 per cent, and they are heavier than the genuine.

It appears that earthquakes are about twice as frequent in Greece as in Japan when area is considered. A catalogue of the National Observatory at Athens shows that 3,187 earthquakes were felt in Greece in the years 1893-1898, and of these 2,918 were recorded in Zante alone. The shocks were more numerous in April and May than in other months.

The new incandescent lamp filament of S. B. Huseman consists of a thread of asbestos upon which is fused a compound of aluminum and iodine. The process of manufacture is claimed to be simple and inexpensive, and to produce

Mrs. Pinkham

The one thing that qualifies a person to give advice on any subject is experience—experience oozes knowledge.

No other person has so wide an experience with female ills nor such a record of success as Mrs. Pinkham has had.

Over a hundred thousand cases come before her each year. Some personally, others by mail. And this has been going on for 20 years, day after day and day after day.

Twenty years of constant success—think of the knowledge thus gained! Surely women are wise in seeking advice from a woman with such an experience, especially when it is free.

If you are ill get a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound at once—then write Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass.

Two stations being connected by telephone.

The problem of high-speed railways is being energetically attacked in Germany. A review of traction systems makes it appear that the speed limits with steam must be lower than with electricity, that the Hellmann steam-electric locomotive has proven unsatisfactory, that the accumulator system has yet many faults, and that the present most promising system is the ordi-

nary one of supplying current from central stations to motors on the cars.

A German society, now building an experimental line of nine miles, is to devote its entire capital of \$375,000 to a study of the question.

Galvanism is used by Dr. Friedlander, of Wiesbaden, to reduce pain and swelling from insect bites, the negative pole being placed over the wound.

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INTERNATIONAL S. S. LESSONS.

June 17, 1900. John VI., 5-14.

The Feeding of Five Thousand.

Crucial times had come, John Baptist was martyred.

At a drunken monarch's call, At a dancing woman's beck, They had severed the stubborn neck.

Prudence suggested retirement. Weariness commanded it. The retreat would also afford the apostles an opportunity to report more minutely to the Master the experiences of their trial trip, two and two, through Galilee, from which they had just returned. So the boat which had been chartered for Jesus, and "waited upon him," was employed to put the weary teachers beyond the reach of the multitudes that pressed upon them, even at meal times. * * *

Head winds probably drove the little bark near shore, and retarded its progress. Chanticleer, as the departure had been, it failed of its purpose. An ever-augmenting throng hurried around the head of the lake, and probably apprised some pilgrim caravan to the Passover of the coming of the great Nazarene. So, when Jesus' boat ran its keel upon the pebbly shore, there stood five thousand men, not to mention the women and children. * * *

So, far from being irritated by this folio of his plans, Jesus' heart was touched to pity at the sight of the shepherdless flock, and he began at once to instruct them in many phases of the doctrine of grace. In the absorbing interest of the theme, neither Teacher nor taught observed how the sun was dipping to the western horizon. * * *

But the commentary of the apostolic college suddenly awoke to the situation. Five regiments! and no stores on hand or any country to forage upon. After some questions on Jesus' part, calculated to test his disciples' faith, but to which they responded with phenomenal obtuseness, he prepares to work what, in some respects, was his most remarkable and significant miracle. * * *

The material basis of the miracle was pithy in the extreme. "But one poor fisher's rude and scanty store."

Is it to ask (and more than needs), Who men and angels daily feeds?"

There is a vivid descriptive touch in the Greek which does not appear in our version. Under Jesus' direction the confused throng was resolved into the order of French parterres. He had them sit plate-wise, so that they looked in their high-colored garments, like veritable flower-beds, with green turf interspersed. * * *

After the cheerful grace, which Jesus never omits, he puts a morsel of bread and fish in the hand of

each apostle, and sends him forth to serve. What he breaks off is larger far than that which remains. But that which remains is undiminished. And the archdeacon was round by the clerk, to the unused fragments are ordered to be gathered up. Each host-tating apostle holds in his hands the tangible evidence of the reality and magnitude of the miracle wrought.

The Teacher's Lantern.

Lovely evidence is here of the implicit confidence which maintained between Jesus and his apostles. They came to him. They told him what they had done in love. * * *

The eldest disciples however, have no monopoly of Jesus' sympathy. He is touched with a feeling for us, too. We can come to him also; to "tell Jesus" is still the disciples' blissful recourse. * * *

The same considerations which have been chosen for the highest effectiveness. A church initiates the Master when it gives an increase of virulence until the final culture proved to be sure death to rats in laboratory trials, and this has been followed by attempts to inoculate the rats infesting farms, warehouses and other places. Reports from several hundred localities have now shown a complete disappearance of rats in 50 per cent of the cases, and greatly reduced numbers in 30 per cent, while in 20 per cent the method has failed.

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